

Can I See Your ID?

From KIMT-TV, Iowa, MN Cerro Gordo County

A grant received by the Mason City youth task force and Prairie Ridge addiction center is making it possible for Cerro Gordo County to step up their compliance checks.

Rookies bar in Clear Lake has no problem asking for id's.

Manager Bobby Schwieder says, "just because they do look old doesn't mean they are old."

So, when they were told that officers are stepping up compliance checks in the area they didn't mind a bit.

Schwieder says, "it's good to keep underage out of the bars obviously so we have no problem with them. if they're not of age they're not going to get served anyway."

That's what Cerro Gordo County Sheriff Kevin Pals likes to hear, but it hasn't always been like that.

Sheriff Pals says, "underage drinking has been going on for decades and it's nothing new but we do know our numbers statistically are higher than other places in Iowa and the nation."

That's why the grant they received is so important. It's going to help pay for law enforcement officer's training and overtime to do extra checks on IDs at area bars.

Compliance checks are simple..an underage college or high school kid is brought into the bar, orders a drink, and if the bar tender doesn't ID them and gets them a drink they will get a citation."

Those citations used to be a fine, but they are also changing.

Sheriff Pals says, "we're offering them if they chose to go to the class the server TIPS training that we wouldn't prosecute them criminally."

Sheriff Pals says the police are not looking to punish the business's, they just want to get tough about a nagging problem.

Pals says, "it's really nothing new, now we've just got a concerted effort that everyone in the county's doing it at the same time.. Clear Lake, Mason City and the Sheriff's Office..all are on the same page working together to get underage drinking numbers down."

So, the quick saying, "can I see your ID," is pretty important to business's selling alcohol.

Sheriff Pals also helped spearhead the effort to get a Minor Consumption and Social Host ordinance passed in Cerro Gordo County. They're extra tools aimed at getting adults to help stop underage drinking.

Authorities are hoping Mason City establishments fair better in future alcohol compliance checks, about a third of them failed the first round.